



## Tailoring childbirth education to the needs of young mothers

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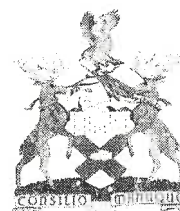
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Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland  
**Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery**



# 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Nursing & Midwifery Research Conference

19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>  
and 21<sup>st</sup>  
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## Evidence Based Care:

Extending the boundaries of nursing and midwifery practice



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## Tailoring childbirth education to the needs of young mothers

The national rate of teenage motherhood is 5.5% and the rate for the North Eastern Health Board 5.2%, which is recognised as a subject of concern. Becoming a mother at an early age is a major transition that requires physical, social and emotional preparation. This paper reports the expressed views, opinions and needs of young mothers concerning natal education. A series of focus groups were undertaken with young mothers attending local community groups based in the Dundalk area. The data from focus groups was tape-recorded, transcribed and analysed using content analysis to identify common categories. Findings clearly reveal the need to tailor the content of education to the needs of the young mother. In particular the importance of teaching about childcare skills and the need to dispel unrealistic expectations. There is a need for educators to focus not only on the health of the baby but also on the personal needs of the pregnant mother such as hassles with school and parents and accommodation problems and advice on how to avoid negative feelings and experiences. All respondents viewed ease of access as a factor in education programs. They all held strong belief in the convenience of locally provided maternity care services. In addition, they wanted the opportunity to take part in mainstream classes as well as having the opportunity to take part in specialised class. For many, their learning opportunities had occurred in a haphazard fashion via other family members (mothers) passing on informal learning about pregnancy and birth. In examining the experiences of young mothers, the study has indicated how antenatal education programmes should be more closely tailored according to need.

### **MIRIAM SMITH, (Lecturer in Midwifery) MSc BA MTD, RM**

Miriam Smith is qualified as a nurse and midwife, has worked in England and Ireland as Staff Nurse, a Staff Midwife and a Delivery Suite Sister, obtained the Midwife Teachers Diploma, a BA from the Open University and a MSc from the University of Ulster. She held the position of Midwife Teacher in the University Hospital Galway and at the Northern Ireland College of Midwifery before appointment as a Lecturer in Midwifery at the University of Ulster in 1996. She practices in the Mater Maternity Unit, Belfast. She is a Member of the Royal College of Midwives and was a member of the Expert Panel, National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Northern Ireland.

Her research interests include Midwifery, Maternity Care and related issues including Women's Health. She has undertaken research related to poverty in childbearing women and is currently working to improve education for parenting.

### **GEORGE KERNOHAN**

George Kernohan is active in health and nursing research with interests in health technology assessment, evaluation of innovation in health, health informatics & computing. He is also a consultant on service user involvement. He teaches evidence-based practice. He holds a combined science degree and a doctorate in orthopaedic research. He has previously lectured at Queen's University of Belfast and is currently Professor of Health Research in the School of Nursing (Public Health Division) at University of Ulster, Jordanstown campus. He is married with five children and lives in Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim.